

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI : That does not mean that there were deaths due to starvation.

MR. K. A. MATHEW : That shows the existence of poverty.

RAJYASEVAPRAVINA G. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI : That is an entirely different question.

PRESIDENT : Order, order. This is just the type of question that I was referring to. The honourable member has made the suggestion in this question that there were deaths due to starvation. The Dewan went to the place and asked various responsible organisations, the Ramakrishna Mission, the S. N. D. P., the Y. M. C. A., the Y. W. C. A., and various others whether they had come across any such incidents. They all said definitely—letters from them are in the Secretariat files—that there were no deaths by starvation although a certain number of people had found it difficult to buy rations at the price fixed for them. It was also pointed out that the labouring people were getting higher wages than at any time before, and that if anybody suffered, it was those with fixed incomes, like the lower paid Government servants. Therefore, in order to relieve the stress, a promise was made to pay Rs. 500 a month to the various organisations. It is significant that not one of these organisations has drawn that sum of Rs. 500 per month. The amount is available to these organisations for the relief of distress, but neither the S. N. D. P., nor the other organisations like the Ramakrishna Mission, or the Y. M. C. A., has drawn it. Until the 16th January 1945 no action was taken by the organisations concerned regarding the subsidy made on the 21st November 1944. Government therefore again addressed these organisations requesting them to state whether they have not gone into the matter. The reply from the S. N. D. P. has been verified by the local Tahsildar. He has eliminated 146 units from the list submitted by the S. N. D. P. and selected 156 units. The Vanchi Poor Fund at Alleppey said they were taking statistics in the matter. They submitted a list on 14-2-1945, the Ramakrishna Mission on 30-1-1945. But in spite of these, many people are deliberately going about saying here and out in Bombay, Delhi and other places that there were many deaths due to starvation. I made it clear that certain persons were collecting subscriptions although this Government wanted no subscriptions to be collected. Subscriptions are still being collected and I make the definite charge that these subscriptions have not been properly accounted for by the people who collect them, including the members of the Servants of India Society. I understand that one or two members of the Servants of India Society went to the place, took photographs of two or three children and purported to send those photographs to America, to England, and to Northern India for the purpose of showing how badly the food situation has been handled here. All that I can say is that, all over India, notwithstanding the efforts made by that minority, it is granted that perhaps the food administration in Cochin and Travancore has been the best conducted in India. Nevertheless, there is persistent propaganda, both by questions here and newspaper statements outside the State, that there is considerable amount of starvation, and deaths due to want of food. That is the particular kind of vendetta that I have designated as both unpatriotic